



Program: All Indian Game Day Program

Organization: New Mexico Senior Olympics, Inc.

In 1985 many pueblo volunteer program leaders expressed a need for more activities for their senior population. Eight percent of New Mexico's population is of Indian background and it became important to see more Native American seniors participate in Senior Olympic Games. Networking with the well established Indian Area Agency on Aging, their program directors and health program managers NMSO established a yearly competition. At the first ever "All Indian Game Day" hosted by a pueblo 150 Native Americans participated in the event. The number of Native American participants has increased and at the most recent All Indian Game Day 25 pueblo/tribes were represented, 370 athlete participants and 157 volunteers and spectators were in attendance. NMSO strives to instill through AIGD greater participation from our Native Americans to become active in year round training programs, set goals to improve their competition level and go on to compete at the local, state, and national games.

In 2002 of sixty-two individuals chosen to carry the Olympic torch in New Mexico five were Senior Olympians. One in particular, John Pino age 101, Native American from Laguna Pueblo expressed it best, "never give up and always remember "the Man Upstairs" when you have a dream. It took me a lifetime to fulfill my dream. I have always wanted to wear these rings." referring to the Olympics logo on his uniform. I had always dreamed of being an Olympian, it is because of Senior Olympics that we have had an opportunity to be involved in sports." John's son and daughter also participated as Senior Olympians. In 1990 and 1997 National Senior Games (Orlando and Tucson) John was acknowledged at the National Senior Games as the oldest participating athlete. John Pino died in 2002 of old age. His son and daughter continued to compete in Senior Olympics.

All Indian Game Day has been a very successful event in recruiting participants for State Summer Games. The Summer Games competition includes 26 different sports and on opening day at the Parade of Athletes the Indian Pueblos march proudly with colorful beautiful 6 ft. banners representing their respective pueblos. The New Mexico Senior Olympics Summer Games has identified many accomplished Indian athletes in track, road race, archery and horseshoes that have advanced to the National Senior Games.

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